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ABSTRACT

This report describes the Kentucky Education Reform Act (KERA) Preschool Programs, which envision an early childhood educational delivery system that provides for developmentally appropriate practices in children's programming, integrated services to families, and interagency collaborations among organizations. For the 1990-91 school year, Kentucky school districts served 5,659 children considered to be at risk of educational failure. The Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) provided technical assistance to school disticts both directly by KDE staff and through five Early Childhood Regional Training Centers. Assistance strategies included site visitations, the development of technical assistance papers, and assistance in seeking accreditation from the National Association for the Education of Young Children. Major activities of KERA programs included: (1) the development of program regulations; (2) the development of teacher certification models; (3) the training of administrators, teachers, and parents; and (4) the development of interagency agreements and contracting procedures. Additional information provided in the report includes: (1) estimates of the number of children eligible for and participating in the programs; (2) budgetary information; (3) costs of services to children with disabilities; (4) a comparison of the costs of KERA programs to the costs of other progams; (5) data on credentials and salaries of preschool teachers; and (6) examples of parent involvement activities. Policy issues relating to planning, personnel, eligibility, finance, and transportation are discussed. Lists of 11 related documents and 5 references are provided. (BC)

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FINAL REPORT

KENTUCKY EDUCATION REFORM ACT (KERA)

PRESCHOOL PROGRAMS

1990-1991

Kentucky Department of Education
Capital Plaza Tower
Frankfort, Kentucky 40601

(502) 564-2000

1991

Executive Summary

The vision of the Kentucky Education Reform Act (KERA) Preschool Programs is a comprehensive early childhood educational delivery system which provides developmentally appropriate practices to children, integrated services to families, and interdisciplinary and interagency collaboration among organizations serving young children in Kentucky. For the 1990-91 school year, 130 of the 176 school districts served 5,659 children considered at risk of educational failure. Approximately 15% of these children had identified disabilities. Full implementation of the preschool handicap program will occur in the 1991-92 school year.

A major focus of the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) in implementing the KERA Preschool Program has been technical assistance provided to local districts both directly by KDE staff and through five Early Childhood Regional Training Centers funded through federal preschool handicap funds. Technical assistance strategies included site visitations, identification of resource classrooms for inclusion in participatory observation/visitations, the development and dissemination of technical assistance papers, self-studies, and assistance in seeking accreditation from the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).

Major activities for full implementation in 1991-92 of KERA Preschool Programs have included: 1) development and field review of proposed program guidelines and regulations; 2) development of a teacher certification model and interim personnel policies; 3) public awareness and training of district administrators, teachers, parents and others; and 4) the development of interagency agreements and contracting procedures to facilitate use of existing programs such as Head Start and child care facilities.

The following information is also included in the final report: 1) the number of students being served (including children who are at risk and handicapped); 2) estimates on the number of children eligible compared to actual participation; 3) district budgeted amounts and percentage of total expenditures on personnel, equipment (start up costs) materials, transportation; 4) data supporting the cost of the handicap program; 5) comparisons of cost of KERA Preschool Programs with cost of other programs provided through other entities such as child care facilities and Head Start; 6) data on credentials and salaries of preschool teachers; 7) sampling of parent involvement activities and satisfaction.

A number of policy issues have emerged with the implementation of the KERA Preschool Programs. The report highlights these concerns.

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INTRODUCTION

The 1990 Kentucky General Assembly enacted the Kentucky Education Reform Act (KERA) through the passage of House Bill 940. Several early childhood initiatives were created by KERA and have been integrated into the early childhood education delivery system in Kentucky. Section 15 of KERA established the Kentucky Early Childhood Advisory Council. Appointed by the Governor, the Council is to advise the chief state school officer on preschool programs. Section 16 stipulated that school districts provide half-day preschool educational programs for 4-year old children considered at risk of educational failure. Optional implementation was set for the 1990-91 school year with full and mandatory implementation by 1991-92. Section 17 created preschool educational services for 3- and 4-year old children with identified disabilities. This section reflects the federal mandate for preschool handicap services under P.L. 99-457 and is to be fully implemented in 1991-92. Since 1986, however, districts have voluntarily participated in a phase-in of preschool special education services utilizing federal funds.

The vision of the KERA Preschool Programs is a comprehensive early childhood educational delivery system which provides developmentally appropriate practices to children, integrated services to families, and interdisciplinary and interagency collaboration among organizations serving young children in Kentucky. This report highlights 1) the status of the programs, 2) the technical assistance planned and implemented to enhance and strengthen the programs, 3) the major activities associated with implementation including coordination and collaboration efforts with

other agencies, 5) additional programmatic information, and 6) the major policy issues associated with the programs. A list of related available documents is also included.

STATUS OF THE 1990-91 SCHOOL YEAR

For the 1990-91 school year, 130 of the 176 school districts served 5,659 children considered at risk of educational failure with allocations to districts totalling $14,277,549. Approximately 15% of the children had identified disabilities. Of the 130 school districts participating the first year, 52 contracted with other agencies for full services. In some cases contractual arrangements were also initiated for health and social services while the school district provided the educational program. Blended programs were created with Head Start, while separate audit trails were maintained for individual children. Although optional, 120 of the 130 districts provided transportation.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE ACTIVITIES

A major focus of the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) is technical assistance provided to local districts directly by KDE staff and through five Early Childhood Regional Training Centers (RTCs) funded with federal preschool handicap funds. Technical assistance strategies include: 1) site visitations, 2) identification of resource classrooms for inclusion in participatory observation/visitations, 3) the development and dissemination of technical assistance papers, 4) guidance in self-

studies, 5) assistance in seeking accreditation from the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), and 6) access to videos and other professional development resources. The sections below describe these strategies and their implementation for the 1990-91 school year.

Site Visitations

Site visitations were provided for the 1990-91 school year for the preschool classrooms in Kentucky by the RTCs and KDE Staff. The RTCs accomplished 629 visits from July through December 1990. These visits incorporated a variety of activities such as consultations on specific children and administrative procedures as well as programmatic technical assistance. KDE provided 61 visits for the school year. In most cases the KDE visitation incorporated the administration of a quality checklist developed by the Department. KDE visitors included staff from the Unit for Early Childhood Development, Division of Early Childhood Services, Vocational Child Care Services teachers, and an early childhood consultant for the School Age Child Care Project.

In addition, six Head Start programs which contracted for preschool services with school districts received an extensive validation/evaluation visit from Region IV Head Start officials.

Identification of Resource Classrooms

The "Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale" (ECERS) by Clifford and Harms was utilized as an evaluation tool to identify resource classrooms. If certain scores were established by the ECERS, the classroom could be utilized for

observations by early childhood professionals within the KERA Programs. As of June 1991, seven classrooms located throughout the state were identified. Those districts with resource classrooms for the 1990-91 school year included: Bullitt, Pulaski, and Warren Counties, and Covington, Harlan, Mayfield, and Murray Independent.

In addition, each RTC operates a model preschool classroom with children with disabilities integrated into the class. Ninety-nine observations by early childhood professionals occurred at these facilities from July to December 1990.

Technical Assistance Papers

In order for each classroom teacher to have specific information on implementation of quality early child programs, eight technical assistance papers are being developed. Topics included: an overview of child development, assessment by observation, child guidance, physical environment, curricular strategies, family involvement, personnel issues, and program evaluation. The Home Economics Department of Eastern Kentucky University was awarded a contract to produce the papers with availability by fall 1991.

In addition, KDE Staff developed and disseminated several technical assistance manuals for program administrators including 1) contracting with non-public school agencies for preschool services, 2) implementation of the preschool handicap program guidelines, and 3) components of quality early childhood programs.

Self Studies

All school districts providing services for the 1990-91 school year were required by regulation to conduct an annual program evaluation. Additionally,

districts have been encouraged to participate in a self-study utilizing the ECERS or the self-study component of the Academy of National Association for the Education of Young Children Accreditation Program.

Assistance with NAEYC Accreditation

Due to the changing role of KDE under KERA, the Department does not accredit early childhood programs as such. Therefore, one option for accreditation for local KERA Preschool Programs is the Academy of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). Sue Bredekamp, Director of the NAEYC accreditation program, was invited in April 1991 to visit Kentucky. Two workshops were held to inform and encourage KDE personnel and school districts on the accreditation process. Additional sessions were held at the June 1991 RTC Early Childhood Conference.

In order to provide technical assistance to districts and other agencies in the self-study process, KDE sent staff to the NAEYC national conference to be trained as NAEYC validators (accreditors). KDE will also support training in Kentucky for other validators in the fall of 1991 and is considering making discretionary monies available to assist districts in funding the cost of self-study and eventual accreditation.

Professional Development Resources

KDE has purchased a number of videos and other professional resource materials. These are available to districts through a checkout process. In addition, each RTC houses a resource center with materials, videos, computer software, and other adaptive technology for children with disabilities.

Video tape footage from various KERA Preschool Programs has been obtained throughout the 1990-91 school year for the purpose of producing a video on quality early childhood programs in Kentucky. This tape should be available by late fall of 1991.

OTHER MAJOR ACTIVITIES

Major activities for full implementation in 1991-92 of KERA Preschool Programs have included: 1) development and field review of proposed program guidelines and regulations; 2) development of a teacher certification model and interim personnel policies; 3) public awareness and training to district administrators, teachers, parents and others in the communities across Kentucky; and 4) the development of interagency agreements and contracting procedures to facilitate use of existing programs such as Head Start and child care facilities.

Development of Program Guidelines

Section 16 (Four-Year Old At Risk). With the passage of KERA, the Kentucky Department of Education was required to develop regulations and program guidelines to be implemented for the 1990-91 school year for the Four Year Old At Risk Program. Four major resources were utilized: 1) Head Start Performance Standards, 2) licensing regulations for child care facilities from the Kentucky Cabinet for Human Resources, 3) NAEYC accreditation standards, and 4) KERA Section 16

required components. The highest standard of each was used to establish the regulations required by KERA Section 16.

The regulations focus on such quality components as: facilities requirements, staffing, parent involvement, food services, transportation, curriculum, program evaluation, operating models, health screening, safety, staff development, and social services. Field review of the regulations included solicitation of comments from the participants of the 1990 KERA Preschool training sessions (school administrators, Head Start directors, private providers, etc.) The initial regulation was promulgated by the State Board for Elementary and Secondary Education in July 1990 and was amended in May 1991 based on input from the Early Childhood Advisory Council.

Section 17 (3- and 4-Year Old Children with Disabilities). Regulations for programs providing services for children with disabilities were also developed. They are compatible with the above standards and have components to ensure quality services for the special needs of children. The handicap program has been designed to integrate into and be supportive of the general preschool program. Further, it is consistent with the proposed addition to NAEYC Accreditation which will address children with disabilities.

The regulations relating to KERA Section 17 were initially developed by an interagency standards committee composed of representatives from schools, Head Start, and private programs from a variety of disciplines. In 1990, the work was initially disseminated as interim guidelines and promulgated by the State Board in May 1991 after wide field review and pilot implementation during 1990-91.

Development of Teacher Certification Model and Interim Personnel Policies

Background. Currently, there is not a teacher certification program for early childhood professionals in Kentucky. In 1988, the Council on Teacher Education and Certification directed KDE to develop plans for certification of teachers of preschool children with disabilities. In response KDE solicited field input and developed an interim Early Childhood Personnel Policy which is still in effect with a modification in May 1990 to include teachers for the program of four year old children. The policy allows flexible entry into the system with training and supervision to assure program quality.

Current Status. To develop a long-term solution, KDE convened an interagency Early Childhood Task Force in 1989 composed of representatives of higher education (education, special education, home economics), public schools, private providers and teachers. Members were identified by the Council on Teacher Education and Certification, with the addition of persons serving on previous related study groups, such as the Governor's Office of Early Childhood. The Task Force developed a certification model for Interdisciplinary Early Childhood Education (IECE) which was adopted by the Council on Teacher Education and Certification in 1990. It is now pending before the new Eduction Professional Standards Board, along with a compilation of all materials developed in 1989 through 1991 to implement the model.

The IECE model is an innovative, interdisciplinary approach to meet the needs in the field for flexibility, combined with national quality standards. A 1990 survey of current preschool and kindergarten teachers in Kentucky found that these teachers had some knowledge applicable to young children (Coffey, 1991). However, there were major needs for training in interdisciplinary skills and the services provided through the KERA Preschool Programs such as collaboration with other agencies and family needs assessments.

Training and Public Awareness

Districts and Organizations. Because the KERA Preschool Programs are innovative and unique to communities in Kentucky, public awareness and training sessions were held throughout the state. Five regional training sessions were held in June of 1990 for personnel from school districts, other interested early childhood professionals, Head Start, private providers, and the general public. Additionally, staff participated in other KERA public awareness sessions throughout the 1990-91 school year. Groups and organizations included higher education, Kentucky Parent Teacher Association (KPTA), Kentucky Head Start Association, early childhood professional organizations, State Colleges of Home Economics, Kentucky Association of Elementary School Principals, Kentucky School Board Association, and others.

In March 1991, regional workshops were held for over 200 coordinators and staff of the federally funded preschool handicap services. Content focused on changes required to move from a voluntary federal program to the mandated state program of KERA, Section 17. In March and April 1991, regional workshops were held on the

joint KERA Preschool Programs for 1991-92. The approximate 300 participants were coordinators for the four year old program, the preschool handicap program, and vendors for services.

Teachers. In addition to the above KDE training sessions, the RTCs served as a major provider of early childhood training for teachers in local programs. Topics were based on needs assessments of districts and other agencies conducted by each RTC's advisory board.

Parents. To enhance recruitment efforts of children into the KERA Preschool Programs, the KDE and school districts cooperatively conducted a preschool awareness campaign in April 1991. Entitled "Building a Better Tomorrow - TODAY", the campaign informed parents and the public as a whole about the KERA Preschool Programs and provided information on how to access the services.

The following items were developed by KDE and distributed through local school districts: 135,000 brochures on developmental milestones for young children, 85,000 lapel stickers advertising KERA Preschool Programs, and 9,500 informational posters. The public broadcast media across Kentucky was also utilized. KDE purchased 600 radio and 25 TV advertisement spots. All major newspapers were sent information on the program. Finally, local districts conducted additional recruitment activities of their own.

Interagency Agreements and Contracting Procedures

KERA clearly mandates that state funds are meant to supplement and not supplant existing federal dollars. Of the approximate 24,600 children (21,000 at risk

plus 3,600 handicapped) who are eligible for KERA Preschool Programs, Head Start serves over 7,800 (including 1,250 children with disabilities). The Kentucky Cabinet for Human Resources (CHR) serves approximately 2,000 children through Title XX funding in child care facilities who may also be eligible for KERA Preschool Programs. Therefore, coordination and collaboration with these groups are essential. Contracting procedures for serving children in non-public school programs needed to be created to ensure that community resources and state dollars were utilized to increase availability of programs and not replace existing ones.

Interagency Agreements. Two interagency agreements were initiated and signed for the 1990-91 school year. One was with Region IV Head Start and addressed such issues as counting of eligible children and the creation of blended programs. The second interagency agreement was with CHR and addressed the relationship between "preschool" and "day care" as defined by CHR regulations.

Both of the interagency agreements are to be revised. In addition, an updated agreement with CHR is being developed regarding collaboration and responsibilities between the CHR Infant/Toddler Program for children with possible disabilities and the KERA Preschool Program for Children with Disabilities.

Contracting. When non-public school agencies are utilized by local school districts to provide preschool services, the agencies must first be approved by the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education. As of May 1991, there have been approximately 85 agencies approved as vendors for the KERA Preschool Programs.

When an agency submits an application for approval, the Department reviews certain information about that organization. Each agency must provide authorized assurances of a non-sectarian board and of its capability of providing any contracted services in compliance with school laws and regulations. Day care licensure and Head Start validation are verified as applicable. An onsite visit by KDE is scheduled if the agency is not currently licensed and therefore not monitored through CHR.

Once an agency is approved by the Board, a local school district may enter into a contract with that agency. The Department reviews the specific contents of the contract and the district's program prior to releasing funds to the district to contract with the agency. Monitoring of the contracted services occurs as part of the Department's overall monitoring of the district's preschool programs. The district retains all responsibility for providing services which meet preschool regulations.

ADDITIONAL PROGRAMMATIC INFORMATION

Estimates of the Total Number of Children Eligible Compared to Actual Participation

The data below compare the estimates of the total number of children eligible for the KERA Preschool Programs with actual participation rates in either Head Start or KERA for the 1990-91 school year and projections for 1991-92 year. The data are separated by program/section of KERA.

Preschool Program for 4-Year Old Children (Section 16)

Eligible Children: 21,000

* 39% of the census of 54,000 4-year olds are estimated to be at risk

Children Served in 1990-91: 13,470

* 64% of eligible children; 23% of all 4-year olds
* 5,659 on KERA funds
* 7,811 on Head Start Funds

Children Expected to be Served in 1991-92: 17,375

* 83% of at risk (comparable to Head Start participation data); 32% of all 4-year olds
* 9,375 on KERA funds
* 8,000 on Head Start funds

Preschool Program for Children with Disabilities (Section 17)

Eligible Children: 10,800

* 10% of the census of 108,000 3- and 4-year old children are estimated to be handicapped.

Children Served in 1990-91: 3,259

* 786 on KERA Section 16 were also handicapped and therefore received federal handicap dollars
* 2,000 on Head Starts funds received federal handicap dollars
* 473 on other sources and federal handicapped dollars

Children Expected to be Served in 1991-92: 6,500

* 60% of eligible (comparable participation to other states)
* 1,500 on KERA Section 16 (at risk & handicapped), plus federal handicap dollars
* 3,000 on KERA Section 17 (handicapped regardless of income), plus federal handicap dollars
* 2,000 on Head Start, plus handicap dollars

District Budgeted Amounts and Percentages of Total Expenditures by Category

Data from financial reports submitted by the 130 school districts providing services for the four-year old at risk students were analyzed relative to percentages of expenditures in cost categories. The findings in major categories are summarized below. The percentages are based on the grand total of allocations to the districts.

Cost Category	Amount Budgeted	Percent of Total
Administration	$ 177,051	1.13%
Instructional Staff	4,266,850	27.27
Pupil Transportation	1,864,367	11.92
Instructional Materials	369,995	2.36
Social Services	109,145	.70
Contractual Services	2,463,451	15.74

Data Supporting the Costs of Handicap Program

Beginning in the 1991-92 school year, districts serving children with disabilities (Section 17) will receive KERA preschool funds based on a weighted per child allocation formula according to the category of the disability. Weightings are to be based on the existing preschool per child formula for at risk funding, the exceptional child add-on formula under the Support Education Excellence in Kentucky (SEEK) (funding structure for kindergarten through twelfth grade) and 1989 KDE cost data on the federal preschool handicap program.

In 1989, the Office of Education for Exceptional Children convened an interagency task force to study the costs of serving three- and four-year old children

with disabilities and the consequent funding needed for the next biennium, with services to be initiated in 1991-92. The task force was composed of 20 members representing local school districts, Head Start, private providers, other public agencies, professional organizations and parents.

In the summer of 1989, the task force conducted a survey of local preschool programs, including a school district, a Head Start program and a private program in each Area Development District (ADD) across the state. An ingredients approach was used in which programs were asked to provide the current cost of specific services.

To standardize responses, specific descriptors were provided for fifteen services, such as: a half-day 35-week center-based program, one hour of speech therapy, and a standard 35-week home-based program (1/2 to 2 hours per week). The findings on average costs per child, per year (1989 dollars) by descriptors are summarized as follows:

Education:			
Half-day programs		$2,951	
Home-based program		1,925	
Private non-profit programs		3,501	
Average cost		2,458	
Related Services:			
Therapy (SP, OT. PT)	$37/hr	$1,406	(per year each)
Other	$42/hr	1,596	(per year each)
Transportation:			
Average		$608	
Specialized		1,185	

In order to project an average per child cost for comprehensive services, estimates were made of the range of costs of preschool services for children with

disabilities who needed less intensive services and those who needed more intensive services:

Level I (Less Intensive): $2,516 per child, per year
Mainstream education, transportation, 3/4 hour of therapy or itinerant services a week, 1/2 hour other services a week

Level II (Moderately Intensive): $5,827 per child, per year
Education program, transportation, 1 hour of therapy a week, 1/2 hour of other services a week

Level III (Most Intensive): $10,710 per child, per year
Education program, transportation, 3 hours of therapy a week for 43 weeks, 1 hour of other services a week

By extrapolating from the relative proportion of handicapping conditions noted for the school-age population, the weighted average cost per child with disabilities was projected as follows: $4,660 (1989 dollars) and $5,040 (1991 dollars).

Since federal supplemental dollars are available for children with disabilities, the average state monies needed per child would be $4,211 after deducting the federal supplement of $828 (1990-91 funding per child). In Kentucky, a projected total of $18,953,352 would be needed to serve 4,500 preschool children with disabilities.

The above figures are comparable to studies from other states.

During 1991-92, the above cost figures for the preschool handicap program will be reviewed as part of the third party evaluation of the KERA Preschool Programs.

Comparisons of Costs of KERA Preschool Programs with Costs of Other Programs

The following sources were utilized for cost comparisons with KERA Preschool Programs: national statistics from a study conducted by the United States General Accounting Office (GAO, 1990) on preschools accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), information from the Kentucky Cabinet for Human Resources (CHR, 1990) on Title XX funding, and Head Start data. It must be noted that there are programmatic differences among the programs in terms of hours of operation and services provided. Additionally, the available data may not reflect real costs to operate the programs.

KERA. The KERA funding allocation to school districts per child for the 1990-91 school year was $2,130, plus a one-time start-up allocation of $400 per child ($2,530 total). This $2,130 figure includes $200 for transportation. The average daily costs based on the required minimum of 175 school days (2.5 hours per day, excluding required meal) was $12.17.

NAEYC. The GAO study examined costs for 265 full-day preschools accredited by NAEYC. Because those facilities closely resemble the KERA Preschool Programs in terms of quality and services, their costs can be compared to the KERA Preschool Program. The average yearly per child cost in NAEYC accredited programs was $4,200. (This figure does not include in-kind contributions by the facilities which would raise that amount to $4,794 in terms of real costs.) The average daily costs based on 260 in-class days (full days) would be $16.15 per child.

Title XX. The reimbursement rate (not actual costs) for children participating in Title XX child care funding from CHR is approximately $9.00 per day (full day). No health screening, social services, or other special services are required so programmatically there are differences.

Head Start. The approximate annual allocation per child for Head Start programs in 1990-91 was $2,438. Based on an average of 144 days (length of day varies) the average daily costs per child would be $16.93. Services are very similar to KERA funded programs, but include more extensive health and social services and generally are in session 3.5 hours or longer.

Data on Credentials and Salaries of Preschool Teachers

Credentials. As previously noted, there are currently no certification requirements for preschool teachers in Kentucky. However, the interim personnel policies for the KERA Preschool Program established three levels of credentials/qualifications for lead teachers. Level I encompasses personnel with a minimum of a bachelor's degree in early childhood related fields and possible kindergarten endorsement and/or other closely associated certifications. Level II includes individuals with bachelor's degree in other related fields. Level III teachers have an associate degree, Child Development Associate (CDA) credentials, or a GED with early childhood experience. Level II and III must have additional professional development activities over and above standard requirements for Level I. Level III teachers must be supervised by a Level I teacher.

A sampling from the 1990-91 school year proposals indicates that approximately 65% of the teachers in the Four-Year Old At Risk Program were Level I teachers, 2% Level II and 30% Level III.

Salaries. Salary data come from a variety of sources. A wage comparability survey conducted by the Training and Technical Assistance Services of Region IV Head Start (Mendel, 1989) showed that the mean wage per hour for Head Start teachers in Kentucky was $6.14. Based on a total of 144 days (average stated above) at six hours per day the annual income would be $5,304. Generally, Head Start utilizes Level III teachers.

Data from the KDE indicate that the median annual salary for beginning certified teachers in Kentucky is $19,310 with a range from $18,754 to $22,105. In a 1989 survey conducted by Community Coordinated Child Care (4-C) of all licensed child care facilities in Kentucky, the mean wage for teachers in child care facilities was $4.63 per hour (Nunnelley & Grever, 1989). Assuming a 7 hour day for 260 days, the annual income for child care providers would be $8,426.

Equity in salaries and benefits will continue to be a major factor in early childhood education. To provide cost effective programs, school districts and other preschool agencies such as Head Start and child facilities often must cut costs in personnel. Because there are no certification requirements, some school districts choose to operate programs utilizing Level III teachers or use Level I teachers at a significantly lower pay scale. Further study in this area is needed.

Parent Involvement Activities and Satisfaction

Parent involvement is a major focus of the KERA Preschool Programs. All districts are required to describe in detail parent involvement activities as part of the proposal process. A minimum of two home visits per year is required and scheduling must provide ample opportunities for teachers to interact with families and to coordinate social services. The typical operation plan of 4 days of classroom instruction with the fifth day for home visits and service coordination optimizes these KERA requirements.

Examples of optional types of parent involvement activities implemented by the KERA Preschool Programs include: volunteerism in the classroom, study groups on child development and other topics on effective parent practices, cooperative child care arrangements, self-help programs, and support for beginning GED classes. Some school districts provided a wide range of activities while others chose to offer only required components. Enhancement and expansion of these activities are expected in future funding years as school districts become more knowledgeable in effective parent involvement activities for the preschool child.

Parental input must be a part of the required annual program evaluation. In a parent questionnaire survey conducted by Audubon Area Head Start (1991), 97% of the 314 respondents indicated parents were welcomed as visitors. Equally high percentages of parental satisfaction were found in other topics questioned.

POLICY ISSUES

The Early Childhood Advisory Council (created by Section 15 of KERA), KDE Staff, and other organizations have identified major policy issues and concerns related to the implementation of KERA Preschool Programs. The Council established four standing committees and one ad hoc committee around which the concerns listed below have been organized. KDE, the Council, school districts, and other interested individuals and organizations will strive to resolve these important policy issues.

Strategic Planning.

* Implementation of an inclusionary model for both the at risk and handicap program in districts as well as at KDE
* Entry of local schools as a primary provider of early childhood programs and reactions of communities
* Use of collaborative arrangements contracting by districts with Head Start, child care facilities and other early childhood programs
* Transitions into primary school
* Differences between preschool programs and the K-12 program
* Facilities/space problems
* Ensuring quality programming and accreditation

Personnel.

* Availability of personnel with training in developmentally appropriate early childhood practices and in special needs
* Teacher certification
* Equity in teacher salaries and benefits
* Application of the internship process to preschool sites when certification is approved

Eligibility.

* Definition of "at risk"
* Mixed age groups - inclusion of kindergarten age children
* Labeling of children as handicapped for the purposes of increased funding
* Open enrollment versus limited registration periods
* Movement of eligible children among districts

Finance.

* Sufficient funds per child
* Development of an equitable allocation system
* Appropriate fiscal reporting mechanisms and monitoring
* Appropriate finance structure based on previous year's enrollment data

Transportation.

* Inclusion of 3 year old children in transportation regulations and system
* Transportation of parents and siblings on buses
* Costs and organization of transportation (bus monitors, etc.)

CONCLUSION

The information presented above highlights the efforts of KDE, individual school districts, and many other organizations in the implementation of the KERA Preschool Programs for the 1990-91 School Year. The visions of a comprehensive early childhood educational delivery system which provides developmentally appropriate practices to children, integrated services to families, and interdisciplinary and interagency collaboration among organizations serving young children in Kentucky is a reality.

LIST OF RELATED DOCUMENTS

Listed below are related documents available through the Preschool Branch, Division of Early Childhood, Kentucky Department of Education, 500 Mero Street, Capital Plaza Tower, Frankfort, Kentucky 40601.

1) Basic Information Sheet: Preschool Program for Four Year Old At Risk
2) Site Visitation Records
3) Comparisons of Head Start, NAEYC, and KERA Standards
4) Regulations for Preschool Program for Four-Year Old At Risk Children
5) Regulations for Three- and Four-Year Old Children with Disabilities
6) KDE Activities/Strategies on Collaboration
7) KDE / Head Start Memorandum of Understanding
8) KDE / Cabinet for Human Resources Memorandum of Understanding
9) Vendor List: Agencies Approved by KDE
10) Preschool Interagency Contracting Technical Assistance Guide
11) Parent Satisfaction Survey Summary Sheet and Examples

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